The Future Is Now

Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation April 18-19 – West Yellowstone

The 2002 Montana G.O.V.* Conference: *Goals, Objectives and Vision for Montana's Tourism Future kicks off Thursday, April 18, at 8:30 a.m. with a look at "America in Transition: A Preview of Emerging Lifestyles and Travel Trends." National travel and leisure market analyst Peter Yesawich will share the latest information that his firm, Yesawich, Pepperdine & Brown, has collected on what our potential visitors are planning.

The Yesawich presentation begins two days of tourism and recreation education, networking and entertainment at the West Yellowstone Conference Hotel. The conference culminates at the Friday night banquet with the presentation of Montana's Tourism Person and Tourism Community of the Year awards. For a full look at the conference agenda, visit Travel Montana's Intranet site: http://travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference.

On Wednesday, April 17, there will be a number of pre-conference activities. From I to 3 p.m., the Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI) directors will review the latest draft of the 2003-2007 Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan. MTRI represents 17 state and federal agencies with tourism or recreation components within their operations. The Travel Montana staff will have a Show N Tell session from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., while the Montana Tourism Advisory Council will meet from 5 to 6 p.m. The Montana Tourism

Coalition will host a silent auction/reception in the Geyser/Canyon/Dunraven Rooms beginning at 7 p.m.

As a special feature throughout the conference, West Yellowstone's Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center is offering free admission to anyone with an official Governor's Conference name tag. Thursday night, the West Yellowstone community is inviting conference attendees out on the town for free food, fun and adventure in the Taste and Tales of West. Details of the evening will be provided during the conference's Thursday lunch and at that afternoon's nohost reception in the exhibitor's area from 4:50 to 6 p.m. If you need more details call Travel Montana at 406-444-2654.

A Perfect Host

Montana hosted 9.6 million nonresident visitors in 2001, according to a preliminary report from the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) from the University of Montana. In 2000, 9.5 million visitors traveled to the state.

"We are pleased that Montana's tourism industry held its own in 2001," said Betsy Baumgart, administrator for the Montana Promotions Division. "While there were some areas within the state as well as some businesses where activity was soft, the numbers reaffirm that Montana is a highly desirable travel destination."

The ITRR report states that these 9.6 million visitors spent over \$1.7 billion in Montana's communities on lodging, food, shopping, transportation and gasoline. The

tourism industry directly supports 28,000 Montana jobs and indirectly another 4,400 for a total of 32,400 jobs. For more tourism research information plan to attend the ITRR sessions at the Governor's Conference.

Travel Montana Turns Web Visitors Into Montana Visitors

Travel Montana's website, visitmt.com turned "window shopping" web visits into more than I8,000 trips to the state in 2001, according to a recent Internet Conversion Research Report. The report concludes that these visitors spent over \$39 million in the state.

The report found that for each \$1 spent on marketing, \$28 was returned to the state. In 2001, the Travel Montana marketing program spent approximately \$1.4 million on its web, print and television advertising campaigns, all of which featured the visitmt.com web address.

"The goal of this Internet research was to measure the effectiveness of visitmt.com in generating visitation to Montana," said Betsy Baumgart. "Because of the popularity of the web, Travel Montana has focused much of its promotional effort on directing people to our website. This study quantifies what we have suspected all along — our website is a useful research tool and our marketing strategy is paying off for Montana."

Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc. of Indianapolis, Indiana, surveyed 701 visitmt.com users. The research was com-

piled from April through December 2001.

Did You Know?

- Visitmt.com has a new look, check it out.
- The March issue of National Geographic Traveler magazine highlighted Glacier National Park.
- The March 17th issue of *Parade* magazine selected Montana's National Bison Range as one of its top Offbeat Vacation venues.

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The study found that of those surveyed who visited Montana, about 10% of the respondents stated they were directly influenced by the website to visit the state. Likewise, nearly half of the 701 surveyed selected Montana as their primary vacation destination. The average length of stay in the state was seven nights. These visitors spent over \$300 per day per group (a travel group is 2.9 people). This translates to an average of \$2,135 total spending per trip.

The full conversion study is available on Travel Montana's Intranet site at www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/research

Back to Simpler Times?

Do you think you could trade in your car, shower, oven and computer to live as a Montana homesteader in the late I880s? That's exactly what three modern families did for the PBS series *The Frontier House*. The series, which airs April 29, 30 and May I, duplicates life on the I883 Montana frontier.

But before these families could step back in time, they needed some training. Nevada City was their training site. There they learned basic survival skills: carpentry, woodstove cooking, gardening, animal care, hunting and soap making. The family's three frontier cabins were modeled from ones found in Nevada City.

Even though the project is complete and the families have transitioned back to the 21st century, the mementos will stay in Nevada City. The Montana Heritage Commission, the state agency responsible for managing the historic mining town, recently acquired many of the artifacts used in *The Frontier House*.

"I believe this series will be as popular as the Ken Burns war series," says Jeff Tiberi, executive director of the Montana Heritage Commission. "We are hoping that people will be excited about *The Frontier House* and will come to see the cabins."

Weekly tours of the cabins will begin in May. Tiberi notes that articles about *The Frontier House* will appear in *TV Guide, Better Homes and Gardens, Smithsonian, Parents, Victoria, American Girl, Glamour, Seventeen, Family Tree and Modern Bride* magazines.

Travel Montana is sponsoring the program in the Seattle and North Dakota public television markets and has provided funding for the production of the Montana PBS documentary *Making The Frontier House*. This program will coincide with the national broadcast of *The Frontier House* and will be available to all public television stations.

Tourism Works for Montana

May 5-12, 2002 is National Tourism Week. Travel Montana encourages folks from around the state to get the word out about how tourism benefits Montana's local and regional economies. A number of interesting tourism facts and figures will be posted on the Intranet site at www.travelmontana.state.mt.us in the Press Room section beginning April 8. Travel Montana can also provide copies of the 2002 Report on the Montana Tourism Industry that can be used to educate Montanans about Travel Montana and our state's tourism industry. If you have any questions about the speaking points or other information contact Publicity Coordinator Mary Boyle at mary@visitmt.com or 406-444-2654.

On the Road Again

Over 500 American Bus Association (ABA) operators from 300 companies recently gathered in Kissimmee, Florida, for the largest ABA meeting in the history of the organization. Travel Montana's Group Travel Specialist, Marlee Iverson, represented the state. Marlee says the conference went very well and that she met with over 40 tour operators, many of them being brand-new companies. Leads from this event can be found on our Intranet site at http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/OUR PROGRAMS/MeetingsConventions.htm or give Marlee a call at 406-444-4107 or e-mail marlee@visitmt.com for more information.



Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

April

- 17 Montana Tourism Coalition annual auction, West Yellowstone
- 18-19 Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation, West Yellowstone
- 25-27 RMI Round Up, Whitefish

May

- 5-12 National Tourism Week
- 5-14 Lewis and Clark Tour Operator Fam

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us.



Travel Montana

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